NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

SENATE

17 March 2015

Present: The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor Suzanne Cholerton, Professor Richard Davies, Professor Chris Day, Professor Steve Homans, Professor Neill Marshall, (Acting PVC HaSS), Professor Tony Stevenson, Professor Nick Wright (Pro-Vice-Chancellors), Ms Claire Boothman, (President, Students’ Union), Dr Tim Cheek, Professor Zofia Chrzanowska-Lightowlers, Professor Peter Clarke, Professor Steven Clifford, Mr Wayne Connolly, Dr Stuart Dawley, Dr Joanna Elson, Professor John Fitzgerald, Professor Tom Joyce, Ms Abi Kelly, Mr Tolu Kolawole, Dr Sara Maioli, Mr David Morris (Education Officer, Students’ Union), Professor Julia Newton, Dr Lindsay Pennington, Mr Steve Williams.

In attendance: Mrs Lesley Braiden (Academic Registrar), Dr John Hogan (Registrar), Mrs Veryan Johnston (Executive Director of Human Resources), and Mrs Lizzie Taylor (Executive Officer, Governance).

Apologies: Dr John Appleby, Dr Heather Brown, Mr Mike Davison, Ms Olivia Jeffery (Welfare and Equality Officer, Students’ Union), Dr Ole Pedersen, Professor Paul Seedhouse, Dr Ruth Valentine, Dr Tony Young and Professor Martha Young-Scholten.

MINUTES

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

49. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Senate held on 20 January 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed.

50. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Progress of business

There were no outstanding items on the business tracking form.

(ii) Honorary Degrees [Minute 40, 20.01.2015]

Received an oral report from Dr John Hogan, Registrar.

Noted that nominations were now invited for the July 2016 ceremonies.

51. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

Received the Vice-Chancellor’s report.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document B. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted:
1. **Deaths**

Received a report on deaths recently announced by the University.

Senate was advised of the following additional deaths of which the University had been notified since the circulation of the Vice-Chancellor’s report:

- **19 December 2014** Emeritus Professor Colin Strang. Professor Strang was appointed as a Lecturer in Philosophy in 1953. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1971, and appointed to Chair of Philosophy in 1975. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts from 1976 to 1979. Professor Strang retired in 1982 when he was accorded the title of Emeritus Professor.

- **22 February 2015** Dr Anthony Downing. Dr Downing was appointed as Lecturer in Psychology in 1974 in the Department of Psychology until his retirement in 2002.

- **7 March 2015** Mrs Irmgarde Horsley. Mrs Horsley graduated from Newcastle University in Speech Therapy 1972 and in Psychology 1974. In 1979 Mrs Horsley was appointed as Lecturer in Speech in the School of Education until her retirement in 1999.

*Resolved that Senate record its deep regret and sympathy for the relatives concerned.*

2. **USS**

Members of Senate were advised that they should have received the consultation documents on 16 March 2015. Any members who had not received these documents were advised to contact Human Resources.

3. **Student Surveys**

Members of Senate were advised that due to technical difficulties, the PRES survey had not been launched on the expected start date of 6 March 2015. Once the survey was launched, the end date would be adjusted to allow for the same response period.

4. **Mitochondrial Research**

On 3 February 2015 the House of Commons voted for a change in the law to permit the use of a pioneering IVF-based technique to reduce the risk of mitochondrial diseases. The House of Lords voted in favour of the introduction of new regulations on 24 February 2015. As a result of these decisions, it would now be possible to implement the research pioneered by Professor Doug Turnbull, Director of the Wellcome Trust Centre for Mitochondrial Research. Senate recorded its congratulations to Professor Turnbull and his team on this significant achievement.

5. **Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

Senate offered its congratulation to Professor Tony Stevenson, following Council’s approval of his appointment as Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 1 April 2015.

6. **Changes to Secure English Language Test Providers for UK Visas**
The University had been informed of Home Office plans to consolidate and reduce the number of English Language Testing Centres that could deliver approved Secure English Language Tests from 6 April 2015. This would have implications for international students applying to study at the University.

7. **General Election: 7 May 2015**

It was anticipated that university funding arrangements would be an issue in the forthcoming general election and further volatility could be expected.

52. **FACULTY STRATEGIC PROGRESS REPORTS**

Received the strategic progress reports and PowerPoint presentations from:

(i) The Faculty of Medical Sciences, presented by Professor Chris Day, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Medical Sciences, on behalf of Executive Board.

(ii) The Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering presented by Professor Steve Homans, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering, on behalf of Executive Board.

(iii) The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, presented by Professor Neill Marshall, Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor Humanities and Social Sciences, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Documents C-E. Copies filed in the Minute Book together with the presentation slides.]

Noted that:

1. Within the Faculty of Medical Sciences, the strong performance in the Biological Sciences Unit of Assessment (UoA) had been particularly welcomed and it had also been noted by a number of external stakeholders.

2. The 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) had introduced the requirement for the submission of impact case studies. It was noted that the majority of the University’s impact case studies would have been submitted into the 2014 REF and would leave limited examples to draw upon on in future rounds. It was noted, however, that this would apply to most institutions and the possibility of making a case for continuing impact was under discussion. It was the view within the sector that it should be possible to resubmit an impact case study if new impact could be demonstrated.

3. Within the Faculty of SAgE, it had been noted that UoA submissions which involved a number of academic units had not achieved as good results as submissions which involved an individual academic unit. A strategy was to be developed to address this for future submissions.

4. It was anticipated that the number of UoAs would be reduced for the next round of the REF.

5. Members of Senate were invited to comment on areas which may have hindered their preparations for the 2014 REF to allow these areas to be addressed for the next round.
Resolved that members of Senate who wished to submit suggestions on how preparations for the next round of the REF could be improved should be invited to contact Professor Chris Day, as Chair of the Raising the Bar Steering Group, or the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

53. RESEARCH & INNOVATION STRATEGY 2015 UPDATE

Received the updated Research and Innovation Strategy presented by Professor Nick Wright, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document F. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

[Minute classified as ‘strictly confidential’. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

54. HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY: ACTION PLAN

Received a draft action plan to support the Human Resources Strategy from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document G. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The actions related to the 6 strategic objectives had been updated. The trade unions had been consulted and targets and timescales would be added before a further version of the action plan was presented to Senate.

2. Recruitment and selection, post-REF review and performance management had been identified as three priority areas.

3. It was confirmed that unconscious bias training would be made available to all staff involved in recruitment and selection processes.

Resolved that members of Senate be invited to submit any further comments on the Human Resources Strategy Action Plan to Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources.

55. REPORT FROM UNIVERSITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Received a report from the meeting of ULTSEC held on 14 January 2015.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document H. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The ULTSEC Innovation Fund, which was valued by staff, had been reviewed to ensure that it continued to meet their needs. Proposed revisions to the scheme included the introduction of a number of deadlines dates for submission throughout the year and a ‘rapid response’ fund for small awards.

2. Help would be provided to staff following the introduction of changes to examination procedures which were designed to improve the examination papers submission rate by prescribed deadlines.
56. UK PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FRAMEWORK CPD SCHEME

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document J. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. HESA was beginning to collect data from institutions on the proportion of teaching staff in possession of Academic Teaching Qualifications. It was understood that HEFCE intended to publish a league table raking institutions according to the data submitted.

2. Staff were encouraged to inform the University of any nationally accredited teaching qualifications that they possessed to help improved the accuracy of University records and also the HESA return.

3. At present it was unknown how the University’s proportion of 41% of staff with teaching qualifications compared with other institutions. Any improvement in this figure would serve to enhance the student experience.

57. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH UNIVERSITY DEANSHIPS

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document K. Copy filed in the Minute Book]

Noted that:

1. The proposal to establish a Dean of Diversity post was considered an important signal of intent within the University. Sport was also an area which deserved real attention. A third proposal, for a Dean of Advancement, was also being prepared and would be presented to Senate in due course. The posts would be advertised internally and would be offered on a three year basis.

2. It was expected that the individuals appointed to the Dean positions would continue in their usual academic role, but would be required to focus on their portfolio of Diversity or Sport, usually on a part-time basis.

3. It was hoped that the Dean of Sport would be able to fulfil a co-ordinating role and bring together existing sport activity from across the University and also within the Students’ Union.

Resolved that the proposal to establish University Deanships be approved and that the first such Deanships should be in the areas of Sport and Diversity, as set out in Document K.

58. INTRODUCTION OF ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS ROLE AND PAY GRADE STRUCTURE

Received a report from Mrs Veryan Johnston, Executive Director of Human Resources, on behalf of Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document L. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Noted that:

1. The proposal to introduce an Associate Professor role and pay grade had been through various consultation processes. Some questions and concerns remained regarding the
transition arrangements for those individuals currently occupying the role of Reader. To address this, it was proposed to introduce a light-touch review process and not require staff to complete a full promotions exercise. Staff would be able to choose whether or not they wished to go through the review process and move onto the Associate Professor grade. If they chose not to they would retain the title of Reader and their pay and conditions would be protected.

2. A focus group of Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors, which included a number of members of Senate, had considered the proposals. The group had expressed concern about the transition arrangements but these had been addressed by introduction of the light touch review process as described above. Concern had also been expressed that the proposals introduced an additional promotions stage that was not present in the current structure.

3. The position of Senior Lecturers under the current proposals was an area where some tensions remained, including the issue of parity of esteem.

4. The current arrangement whereby Senior Lecturers and Readers where on the same pay scale, despite the fact that Readers had completed an additional external assessment process, was an anomaly and the proposals sought to address this.

5. It was clarified that if a Reader who transferred to the Associate Professor role then applied for a Professorship, the promotions process would take into account all work undertaken since they first became a Reader.

6. The transfer of Readers to Associate Professor was expected to be the norm but it was important to put a light touch review arrangements in place to ensure appropriate standards were maintained and that the principles established under the ‘Raising the Bar’ programme were adhered to.

7. Rather than removing confusion, it was suggested that the proposals would result in the introduction of a title that was not well understood internationally. Within Europe and the US the title of Associate Professor was considered to be equivalent to the role of Senior Lecturer at UK institutions. If the proposals were introduced it was argued that it would have the effect of downgrading the Senior Lecturer role.

8. High ranking institutions such as Warwick and Nottingham already used the title of Associate Professor and it was suggested that individuals at institutions such as these may not consider coming to Newcastle for a Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor position as they would consider it to be of lower status. It was explained that the University would seek to counter such perceptions by clearly stating what the roles of Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor entailed, setting out their respective pay scales, and also how the roles fitted into the University's overall career structure.

9. It was proposed that the introduction of the Associate Professor title and the removal of the title of Reader at Newcastle would result in a lowering of the status and distinction of the position of full Professor. The external perception would be that almost all academic staff were at professorship level. Although many other countries did not have Readerships it was considered that, contrary to what had been stated previously, the status of this position was well understood externally.

10. Whilst one of the aims of the proposals was to reduce confusion it was considered that the current proposals would introduce a system which was not consistent with other institutions within the Russell Group or within the UK. It was suggested that the University should consider introducing proposals in conjunction with other members of the Russell Group or Universities UK to ensure the implementation of a system that was comparable and well understood.
11. The proposals were considered to introduce a promotions gap between the position of Senior Lecturer and Professor where none currently existed. It was suggested that this would create the perception amongst staff that, under the new arrangements, promotion from Senior Lecturer to full Professor would be harder than it was at present.

12. It was considered that Senate should be able to consider the promotions criteria before being asked to make a final decision on the proposals.

13. The current arrangements for academic staff included four tiers: Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader and Professor. In order to inform further discussions, it was suggested that data should be gathered from previous promotion exercises to determine the proportion of staff promoted from Senior Lectureship to Readerships, from Senior Lectureships to Professorships and from Readerships to Professorships.

14. It was considered that the title of Associate Professor was well understood within the Commonwealth. The possibility of establishing a consistent approach to academic job titles amongst UK universities was thought to be unlikely.

15. It was important to remember the reasons why the introduction of the Associate Professor job title was first considered. It had been considered desirable to remove an anomaly in the current arrangements whereby Senior Lecturers and Readers were on the same pay scale even though applicants for Reader went through external evaluation, which Senior Lecturers do not, and many Senior Lecturers apply for promotion to Reader. It had also been considered desirable to recognise the more senior role of Reader through the pay scales. The need to address these two issues remained.

Resolved that:

(i) The criteria for promotion from Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor and from Associate Professor to Professor should be prepared.

(ii) Previous promotions data should be presented to determine the typical promotions route from Lecturer/Senior Lecturer to Reader/Professor.

(iii) A Senate Focus Group should be established to further consider the Associate Professorship proposals and promotions criteria, taking into account the promotions data obtained under (ii) above.

(iv) A report from the Senate Focus Group should be presented to Senate at its meeting on 12 May 2015.

59. ACADEMIC DISTINCTIONS – TITLE OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS (STATUTE 29(4))

Reported that, in accordance with Statute 29(4), Senate may accord the title of Professor Emeritus on professors retiring from the University.

Considered a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor following consultation with the relevant faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellors, for the conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document M. Copy filed in the Minute Book]

Resolved that the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on the following individuals with immediate effect:

Professor Martin Eccles
Professor William Outhwaite
Professor Diana Whaley

60. PRO-VICE-CHANCELLOR SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE AND ENGINEERING

Reported that the procedure for the appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellors, as set out in Senate Standing Order X, was as follows:

(i) The Vice-Chancellor may recommend to Senate and Council any establishment of, or appointment to, a Pro-Vice-Chancellor post.

(ii) If Senate and Council approve the recommendation, a joint selection committee shall be established comprising:

- The Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair)
- Three members appointed by Council
- Three members appointed by Senate

In accordance with Senate Standing Order X, at least three members of the Committee must be members of the Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering.

The Committee will consult widely amongst Senators, Councillors and the Faculty and will invite those consulted to propose names for consideration.

Considered a recommendation from the Vice-Chancellor for the establishment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering post.

[Circulated with a supplementary agenda as Document Q. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

Resolved that:

(i) The recommendation for the establishment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Science, Agriculture and Engineering post be approved;

(ii) Nominations for the Senate-appointed members of the joint selection committee should be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor;

(iii) Senate grant the Vice-Chancellor delegated authority to approve the Senate-appointed members of the joint selection committee.

61. REPORTED BUSINESS

Received a report of action taken in accordance with agreed procedures, approved where necessary by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and/or the Chair of Council on behalf of Council, and by other University bodies and Chairs.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document N. Copy filed in the Minute Book.]

62. FEES SCHEDULE

Received the fees schedule for 2015-16 which had been endorsed by Executive Board.

[Circulated with the agenda as Document O. Copy filed in the Minute Book]

Resolved that the Fees Schedule for 2015-16 be approved, subject to the agreement of Council.

63. ANNUAL REPORT FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE
Received the Annual Report from Ethics Committee from Professor Tony Stevenson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Planning & Resources and Chair of Ethics Committee.
[Circulated with the agenda as Document P. Copy filed in the Minute Book]

64. DATES OF MEETINGS OF SENATE 2015-16

Noted that meetings of Senate would take place at 2pm on the following dates in 2015-16:

- Tuesday 6 October 2015
- Tuesday 17 November 2015
- Tuesday 19 January 2016
- Tuesday 8 March 2016
- Tuesday 3 May 2016
- Tuesday 28 June 2016

There would also be a joint lunch with Council at 1pm on Monday 11 April 2016 followed by a joint meeting from 1.45 – 5.00pm.

65. SENATE DINNER

Noted that Senate Dinner would be held at 6.30pm for 7pm on Tuesday 17 November 2015.